



February 2000

THE TWISTER

SOUTH CENTRAL CIVILIAN PERSONNEL OPERATIONS CENTER
REDSTONE ARSENAL, HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA



**But I Had
No Clothes!**

Recently Government Executive magazine ran an article titled "Clothes Call" by Brian Fierl and Katy Saldarini. The article reminds us to be careful in our assumptions concerning permissive miscellaneous charges and reimbursements for expenses while on Temporary Duty (TDY). The article cites a recent decision issued by the Board of Contract Appeals General Services Administration in which a civilian Air Force employee realized upon arriving for TDY (Sunday) that the Air Force (military flight) had misplaced his luggage. The employee made it through the day on Monday by wearing the clothes he had traveled in the previous day. However, when his suitcase had not been recovered by the end of the day, he decided to go shopping. He purchased a pair of slacks and three shirts for \$60.86. The Air Force located the employee's suitcase and returned it to him on Tuesday. In settling his travel claim the employee asked the Air Force to reimburse him for the cost of the clothing that he purchased. The employee was of the opinion that the cost should be reimbursed as a miscellaneous expense under the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR). The Air Force denied the request and the employee appealed the decision.



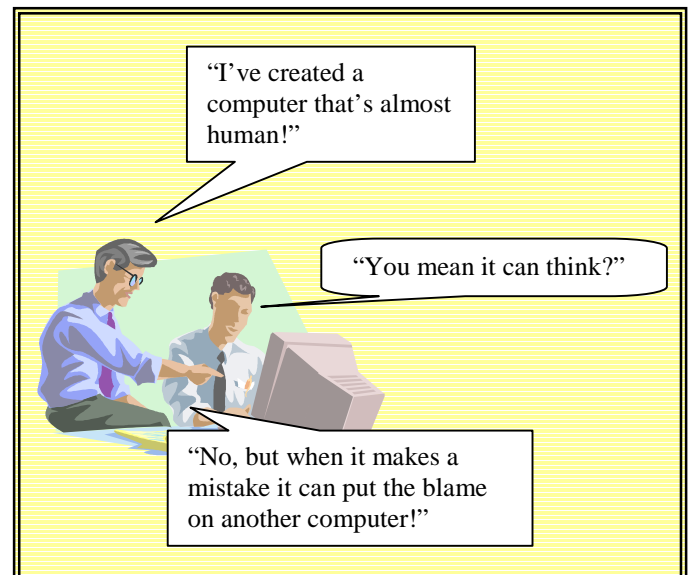
The Board of Contract Appeals General Services Administration upheld the Air Force's decision. The examples of reimbursable miscellaneous expenses set out in the JTR are for items and

services that are used during the performance of an employee's temporary duties in connection with the transaction of official business and as such provide a benefit to the Government. In this instance the employee did not purchase the clothing primarily for the benefit of the Government. He purchased clothing as one would reasonably be expected to furnish as part of the usual and necessary items needed to perform their regular duties. In addition, he was free to retain the clothing for his own use.

"While some clothing purchases and rentals have been approved for reimbursement in the past, on those occasions the clothes were essential to carrying out an employee's official duties." In this case the clothes purchased were not essential to the employee's job.



As pointed out in the article, the moral of this story is to be careful in our assumptions concerning permissive miscellaneous charges and to pack a second set of clothes in your carry-on bag when traveling for TDY. ☺



South Central CPOC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

An important SC CPOC objective is to improve the delivery of civilian personnel services and products through standardization. To support this endeavor, SOPs have been developed to provide additional descriptions of standardized SC CPOC processes. You can access SOPs on the following topics through the SC CPOC Intranet site.

Quick Index to Topics

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Verification of Qualifications for Selections Under DA Career Program Procedures

Registrants in most of the Department of Army Career Programs self-certify their minimum qualifications for referral without any CPO review when the registration packages are submitted to the Career Referral Office (CRO). Under the current business process map the CPACs request the Career Referral from the CRO, receive the certificate and forward it to the manager to make a selection. The CPAC, managers and employees need to be aware that because of the self-certification process, it is possible for a career program registrant to be referred and tentatively selected for a position without meeting the qualification requirements. The DA Business Process Map for Career Program Recruitment Actions requires that the CPAC notify the CPOC of career program selections so the CPOC can verify qualifications prior to commitment.

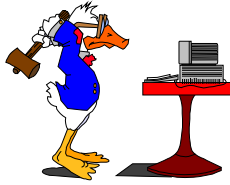
National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000

With the enactment of Public Law 106-65, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 on October 5, 1999, the following changes became effective. Emergency essential employees in a combat zone may have their leave restored whether or not it was scheduled in advance. This amendment relieves employees and supervisors from the administrative burden of scheduling, canceling, and restoring excess annual leave in this situation. Restored annual leave must be scheduled and used by the end of the leave year ending two years after the termination of the exigency of the public business. The following areas are considered combat zones: Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia/Montenegro); Albania; The Adriatic Sea; The Ionian Sea; The Persian Gulf; The Red Sea, The Gulf of Oman; part of the Arabian Sea; Gulf of Aden and the total land areas of Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. The following areas are considered qualified hazardous duty areas and are to be treated the same as combat zones for this purpose: Bosnia and Herzegovina; Croatia and Macedonia.

Employees deployed overseas away from their permanent duty station in support of Operation Joint Forge (but outside the former Yugoslavia), Operation Allied Force, Operation Joint Guardian, Operation Southern Watch, or Operation Northern Watch are not entitled to combat zone benefits.

Military Reserve Technicians on active duty in support of combat operations are entitled to leave without loss of benefits. A military reserve technician on active duty without pay is entitled to a total of up to 44 workdays of leave in a calendar year without loss of or reduction in pay, loss of accrual of leave, loss of credit for time or service, or loss of performance or efficiency rating.

An employee may use his or her entitlement to 15 days of military leave for "inactive-duty training." An employee is entitled to military leave without loss of pay, time, or performance or efficiency rating for active duty training, inactive-duty training, or engaging in field or coast defense training.



**The Cold is
coming....
Bring on HEAT**

It's early on a Monday morning, you haven't even had your coffee yet and now the computer won't boot up. The first thing you want to do is kick the computer. But you think better of that. So what do you do? Why, you call up your "buds" in the ISD Network branch, of course. However, when you call them up you're shocked and they don't offer any words of wisdom, no quick answers. The ISD branch tells you to call the help desk (313-0849) and open a HEAT ticket! But you don't want a ticket--you just want your computer fixed! Why do you have to open a HEAT ticket, and by the way, what in the world IS a HEAT ticket?

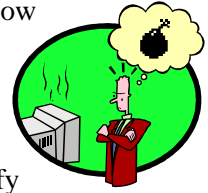
As PC networks and the applications running on them get more complex, agencies are turning to help-desk software to help their information management staffs manage and prioritize their workloads, record and track problems and their solutions, and bolster the productivity of their workers. HEAT is the name of a help desk program that traces computer-related problems throughout all CPOCs, including the South Central. It has been installed for quite a while, but has only recently started to be fully implemented. You might want to think of HEAT as the PERSACTION of the ISD world.

When you call the help desk a HEAT ticket is opened. If the problem can be solved on the spot, like a password reset, the ticket is closed on the spot. If not, the ticket is assigned by the help desk to an individual in the Network or Functional branch. The technician acknowledges receipt of the ticket and prioritizes the problem in relation to other assigned problems and works on them. As the technician works on the problem, he/she keeps a journal, that is part of the HEAT ticket. When the problem is fixed, the technician enters the solution and closes the ticket

So why do we have to use HEAT? Why can't I call the technician directly and cut out all this

bureaucratic red tape? For a lot of the same reasons that you don't fill jobs or classify positions without a PERSACTION. The HEAT ticket helps in tracking your problem and ensures that it is given the proper attention. This system helps us monitor workload and manage the productivity of the ISD technicians. Additionally, this system produces a database of problems/solutions reported by all of the CPOCs that allows technicians to do searches on the database for possible solutions.

So, you have decided to work with the system and open a HEAT ticket, what do you need to know? Well, it would be handy to know your name. Once the help desk puts your name into the ticket, it should fill in most of the pertinent data. In order to ensure that this info is correct, please verify your personal data on your first call and whenever your data changes. You should next give the help desk a short, concise description of the problem. This should include your workstation number (located on the top of the PC itself) and what you were doing at the time. Your problem will be assigned a ticket number.



If after a reasonable amount of time you have not been at least contacted about your problem, you should call the help desk to check the status of your ticket.

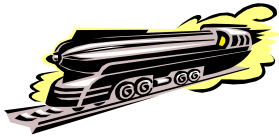
Now when you call your favorite technician and are asked, "Did you open a HEAT ticket with the help desk?", understand that we are just trying to make the system more responsive for you. ☺

**"Knowledge is of two kinds.
We know a subject ourselves,
or we know where we can find
information upon it."**

- Samuel Johnson

" THE HRDD WORD "

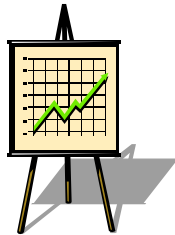
CHOO CHOO BABY AWARD



The HRDD proudly presents its coveted **"CHOO CHOO BABY"** Award to Ms. Paulette Fouche, Information Support Activity St. Louis, AR-PERSCOM, in recognition of her enthusiastic and positive-minded implementation of TRAIN!

FIRST QUARTER FY 00 TRAINING STATISTICS

DD Forms 1556 entered into DCPDS	2,672
Training PTIs entered into DCPDS	1,346
TRAIN assistance	416
Education Level update	124
DCPDS training report assistance	42



Regional Training Courses – Classroom	10
Regional Distance Learning Courses	9
Distance Learning Sites	64
SCCPOC Training Courses- Classroom	17
SCCPOC Self-Paced Training Courses	4

INTERNAL TRAINING PROGRAM UNDERWAY

The SCCPOC internal personnel development program continues to progress. The program, developed by the CPOC Staffing & Services Division and supported by the Human Resources Development Division, consists of 73 modules covering a wide range of personnel issues. Each module is approximately one hour. Presently 10 modules/16 sessions have been offered representing over 220 training instances.



HRD ONLINE CHAT SESSION



The next Training Advisory Group (TAG) online chat session is scheduled for Thursday, February 24. Topics to be discussed include updating education levels, FY00 TAG Workshop, distance learning and FY01 training survey. The online chatroom can be accessed from the HRD web page at: <http://www.cpocscr.army.mil/hrdd/tag/TAG.htm> . Contact John Heath (256-313-0801/DSN 897-0801) for additional information or a chatroom user ID.

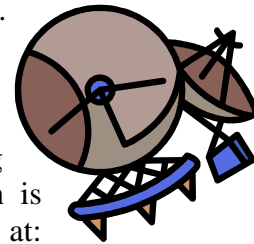
NEW CPOC TEAM IN THE WORKS



The SC CPOC is finalizing a new internal development program titled Tomorrow's Executives And Managers (TEAM). The new program, open to CPOC employees at the GS-12/13 grade levels, will provide formal training, self-development opportunities and professional developmental assignments to selected participants. The goal of the program is to develop a cadre of individuals that are well qualified to compete for future leadership positions. A selection panel will convene this month. Look for a list of participants in the next edition of the *TWISTER*.

NEW DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS SCHEDULED

Several new distance learning programs have recently been scheduled. These sessions utilize high tech training delivery methods such as the Government Education & Training satellite Network (GETN) and the Army's Teletraining Network (TNET). Topics include: Overcoming Adversity, Time Management, Violence in the Workplace, Managing Difficult People and Virtual Teams. Complete course information is available in the training section of the SC CPOC web page at: http://www.cpocscr.army.mil/hrdd/courses/schedule_B.htm



FREE TRAINING



"Free" training is available to SC CPOC employees. Now is an excellent time to take advantage of this opportunity. Take a look at your IDP and see if any free training is listed. These "freebies" are available through CD-ROM, WEB-based training, TMD, SSD internal training, and other classroom offerings. If you need assistance in scheduling these courses, the HRDD POC is Ms. Donna Sanders, 3-0775.

Misuse Of Government Resources

The "Standards of Ethical Conduct" requires employees to "protect and conserve Government property" and "not use such property, or allow its use, for other than authorized purposes." (5 C.F.R. Sec. 2635.704). The DoD "Joint Ethics Regulation" (JER), DoD 5500.7-R, helps to define "authorized purposes." (JER 2-301). In addition to



official use, "authorized purposes" can include some occasional, incidental and intermittent personal use of reasonable duration if it does

not interfere with mission or official duties and does not result in significant additional cost, when authorized by the "agency designee." Dependent upon activity policy, employees may be permitted to use their computers, communication system and other resources for certain occasional, incidental, and intermittent personal use of reasonable duration.

In "The Washington Post" business section of January 3, 2000, there was a report about five Army employees of the Military District of Washington (MDW) caught allegedly misusing their Government computers, e-mail accounts and internet access. According to the report, they used their Government computers and Internet access to

download software from a commercial website (**AllAdvantage**) and install it on their computers. This software tracks and pays users for their time spent on the web; in addition, they can earn commissions by getting others to join. Apparently, one of the MDW employees being solicited to join by a fellow employee, talked to a reporter. When the reporter contacted MDW, the spokesman knew nothing about this scheme. However, it was quickly uncovered, and five Army employees were implicated. Employees should be aware that accessing, installing and using **AllAdvantage** or similar software on their Government computers violates the following proscriptions set forth in the



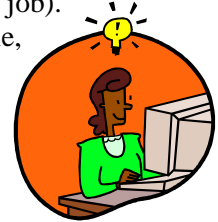
regulations and policies referenced above:

Misuse of official position for personal gain; and, Misuse of Government resources.

Worse, it could even be a violation of a criminal law (18 U.S.C. Sec. 209) that prohibits the supplementation of our Federal salary in connection with the performance of our official duties (e.g., receiving payment for doing research on the web in the performance of our job).

Authorized use of the telephone, computers, e-mail, etc., must never include use for commercial purposes. In

addition, we need to be extremely careful about business dealings with fellow employees. The general rule is "no solicitation" in the office. What if you have already installed this software on your Government computer? **Uninstall it!** What if you have already received money for surfing the web on the job or as commissions for soliciting co-workers? **Return it to the source!** What if you have concerns about solicitations in your workplace? Go to your supervisor, or your Ethics Counselor!



PD Library and FASCLASS: What's the difference?

Now that most CPOCs have uploaded all their position descriptions into FASCLASS, we in the Classification Division are being asked questions such as the following: "What's the difference between PD Library and FASCLASS?" "Are the position descriptions in FASCLASS the same as those in PD Library?" "Why are you reviewing the classification of this position description since I got it from another region's FASCLASS file?"

To answer these questions, let's start with the things PD Library and FASCLASS have in common: Both were developed by HQDA, both contain position descriptions used at various Army installations, and both are available on CPOL. And, yes, FASCLASS contains all the position descriptions that are in PD Library, but PD Library does not contain all the position descriptions that are in FASCLASS.

So just what is the difference between PD Library and FASCLASS? First, PD Library is composed primarily of position descriptions for civilian positions considered "typical" throughout Army. As such, PD Library contains approximately 8,000 position descriptions. FASCLASS, though, contains the position descriptions for **all** civilian positions in Army. As mentioned above, each CPOC has uploaded its position descriptions into FASCLASS; so any position description used in Army is in FASCLASS. Essentially, FASCLASS is the Army's master position description file and contains over 100,000 position descriptions.

The second and most important difference between the two pertains to the classification certification of their position descriptions. The appropriate major command (MACOM) headquarters has reviewed and certified the classification of all position descriptions in PD Library as being accurate. No

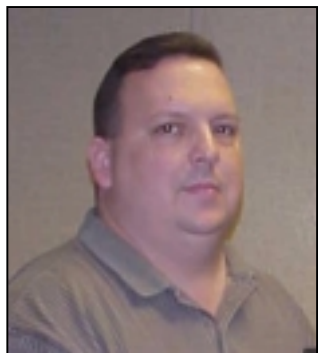
MACOM headquarters has reviewed and certified the classification of the position descriptions in FASCLASS, unless the position descriptions are included in PD Library or are standard position descriptions issued by the MACOM headquarters or HQDA. Thus, the majority of position descriptions in FASCLASS do not bear a MACOM headquarters or HQDA "seal of approval" regarding their classification. For this reason, CPOC classification specialists must review and validate the classification of any FASCLASS position description selected for use by managers that were not previously approved by a MACOM headquarters or HQDA.

In the future HQDA may combine PD Library and FASCLASS. For now, though, PD Library and FASCLASS remain two separate and distinct file systems.

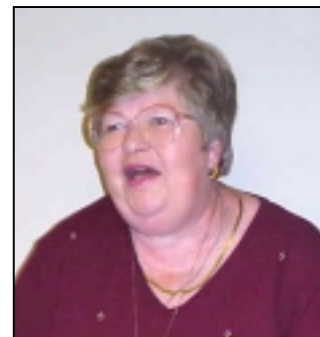
South Central Civilian Personnel Operations Center recognizes Employees of the Year for 1999

The SC CPOC Employee of the Year Award Program is established to recognize and honor members of the SC CPOC Team for their outstanding performance, notable achievements, and significant contributions during the previous fiscal year. The program is open to all SC CPOC employees.

Nominations are accepted in four categories. Category I includes GS-05 and below, Category II includes GS-06 through GS-08, Category III includes GS-09 through GS-11, and Category IV includes GS-12 and above.



**Michael Burns
Category 1**



**Sue Bolding
Category 2**

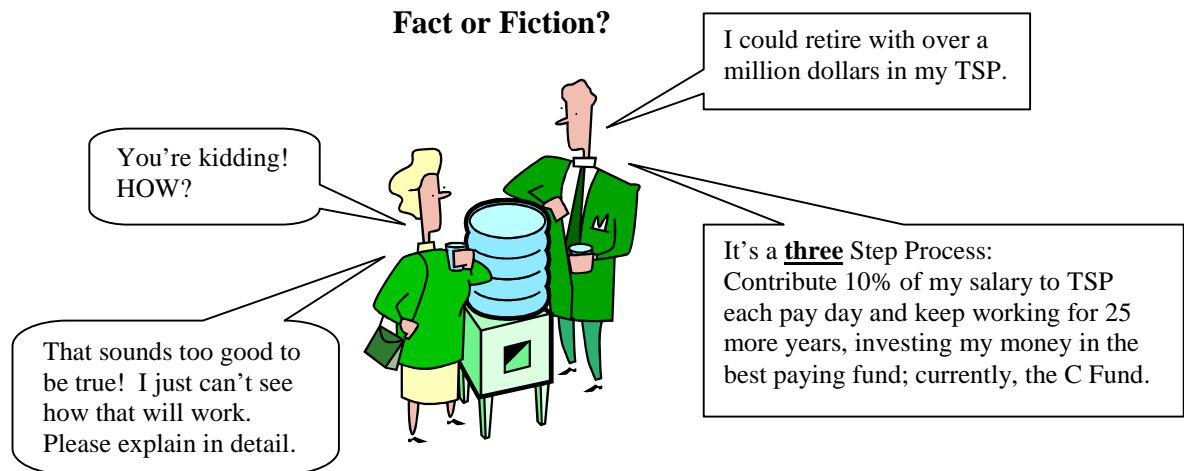


**Young Ryder
Category 3**



**Madene Harris
Category 4**

RETIRE FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT A MILLIONAIRE!



It works like this: As a GS-9, Step 6, I earn \$40,502.00 annually. The government automatically deposits a contribution of 1% into my TSP account. If I contribute to my account, I will receive government matching contributions dollar for dollar on the first 3% and 50 cents on the dollar for the next 2 %. Getting government matching contributions is really a good deal! Are you receiving the 5% government contribution? This is an immediate return rate of 100% on your first 5% and all you have to do is participate. Another wonderful thing about TSP is your contributions are excluded from your taxable income so your account will accrue tax-deferred year after year.

Using the TSP calculator, I projected how much my account will have in it in 25 years. Historically, since the inception of TSP the average annual rate of return has been slightly over 19%. I am using 14% for projecting my retirement benefits. You will need to keep an eye on the rates the funds are paying and decide which account(s) will offer you the best rate of return based on your personal comfort level and risk involved. For those that might not share my optimism about the rate of return remaining at 14% or more, I have also projected the balances using a 10% rate. However, I urge each of you to go into the TSP calculator (<http://www.tsp.gov/calc/calc0f.html>) and project your own balances.

The following chart reflects projected balances that I could achieve depending on the amount of my contribution:

My Contribution	Agency Contribution	Balance assuming 14% Return Rate	Balance assuming 10% Return Rate
0%	1%	\$ 91,273.00	\$44,883.00
2%	3%	456,368.00	224,415.00
5%	5%	912,736.00	448,831.00
10 %	5%	1,369,104.00	673,246.00

The above calculations do not include any salary increases, within grade increases, or promotions that I expect to receive during the next 25 years. Even if the interest rates should drop some, by contributing 10%, when my pay increases, within grade increases, and any promotions I may receive are included, I could still have over a million when I retire.

If you are a FERS employee, do not be fooled into thinking that you will have a good retirement depending only upon Social Security, the FERS Basic Annuity and the government TSP automatic contribution of 1%. Your best chance of ensuring a comfortable retirement is by contributing to

TSP. Your TSP account balance will depend upon the amount you contribute. With a 10% contribution and the government matching 5% in the TSP you are systematically investing 15% of your salary toward retirement. The Basic FERS Annuity is based on your contributions of 1.20% and your Social Security benefits will depend upon the laws in effect at the time you are eligible to retire.

If you cannot afford to increase your contribution to 10% now, here are some tips for increasing your contributions:

- a. When you receive your annual pay increase, put a percentage of it into your TSP. (For example, you could use 2% of the recent 4.69% pay raise for TSP).
- b. When you get a within-grade increase, use a percentage for your TSP.
- c. If you get promoted, use a percentage of the increased salary.

CSRS employees may contribute up to 5%. Although there is no government matching contributions, you receive the same tax-deferred benefits and investment options as the FERS employees. TSP can provide another source of retirement income in addition to your CSRS annuity.

The Twister is prepared by Mr. Bryan Weekley, SC CPOC, Director's Office. Your comments, ideas, or suggestions concerning this newsletter are welcome. You can contact Bryan at Comm: (256) 313-1965 or DSN: 897-1965 or e-mail: weekleyb@cpoc.redstone.army.mil